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GENERAL DEBATE

Letter dated 19 October 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to you concerning the letter addressed to you by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) which has been circulated as document A/49/497 and, upon instructions of my Government, I have the honour to inform you of the following.

The letter contains accusations and misinterpretations in connection with the statement made by the Austrian Foreign Minister, Dr. Alois Mock, that are totally unfounded. As a country of the region, Austria attaches particular importance to a just, durable and peaceful solution to all conflicts in the area of the former Yugoslavia. Contrary to the allegations made, Austria, during the 1980s, shouldered a leading role in European efforts to assist the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in its transition process both in political and economic terms. Unfortunately, all efforts directed at the establishment of a peaceful restructuring of the former Yugoslavia based on democratic principles and human rights failed due to the uncompromising attitude of the Serbian leadership and the Federal authorities. Only after several constituent republics of the former Yugoslavia, in exercising their constitutional rights as well as the right to democracy and self-determination, had proclaimed their independence, fulfilling the universally recognized criteria of statehood, did Austria, in concert with other European countries, in particular the States members of the European Community, recognize these republics.

The responsibility of the Government in Belgrade for instigating and initiating the outbreak of hostilities leading to armed conflicts in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina has been internationally recognized and clearly condemned in many Security Council resolutions and documents of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Since then, Belgrade has continued massively to support Serb rebels in neighbouring countries. In spite

of its professed acceptance of the peace plan advanced by the Contact Group, the authorities in Belgrade refuse to recognize the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the other successor States of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Austria remains deeply concerned about the situation in Kosovo and Sandzak. The continuing violations of basic human rights, including the suppression of autonomy in Kosovo and mass expulsions from the Sandzak region, have been documented by independent international observers. Measures to redress the situation are urgently called for to prevent the outbreak of further violence, which would threaten international peace and security.

Austria will not cease to call for and support peaceful means to end the crises which have arisen in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia/Montenegro itself, and which are contrary to the aspirations for lasting peace and well-being shared by all peoples of the region, including the Serbian people. However, if such peaceful means do not yield the required results, the United Nations must stand ready to apply all the provisions of the Charter in order to maintain its credibility.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 9.

(Signed) Ernst SUCHARIPA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative